

Top Secret



Central Intelligence Bulletin

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February 4, 1974

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Approved For Release 2003/12/03 : CIA-RDP79T00975A026100070001-4

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February 4, 1974

Central Intelligence Bulletin

CONTENTS

EGYPT: Sadat dismissed Haykal as editor of Al-Ahram probably in order to muzzle the increasingly obstreperous journalist. (Page 5)

GRENADA: Premier Gairy reneges on mediation with political opponents. (Page 9)

FOR THE RECORD: (Page 10)

25X1

Approved For Release 2003/12/03 : CIA-RDP79T00975A026100070001-4

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2003/12/03 : CIA-RDP79T00975A026100070001-4

EGYPT: President Sadat's decision this weekend to dismiss Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal as managing editor and chairman of the board of Al-Ahram and appoint him presidential press adviser is probably designed to muzzle the increasingly obstreperous journalist, whose columns have often erroneously been judged to reflect Sadat's thinking. There is some question whether Haykal will readily agree to being "kicked upstairs"; press reports indicate that he will turn down the advisory post.

Sadat may come in for some criticism from the intellectual establishment at Al-Ahram for appointing Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Hatim as board chairman. Hatim was involved in the removal a year ago of several leftist writers from Al-Ahram and, despite their reinstatement, he is not popular with the press.

Ali Amin, Haykal's replacement as managing editor, is highly respected in press circles. He returned last week from nine years of self-imposed exile which followed the arrest in 1965 of his brother on charges of espionage, allegedly in collusion with the CIA. The brother, also a journalist, was released last week, and both have since received widespread praise in the Cairo press.

Sadat may hope to mollify his opponents in Al-Ahram by appointing Amin, and at the same time to signal through Hatim's appointment that freedom to oppose the government, as Haykal had recently done, will not be countenanced.

Haykal has had his differences with Sadat for years. Although frequently assumed to be a spokesman for the President, he has in fact been his own man since the death of his patron, Nasir. Since the cease-fire of October 1973, Haykal has consistently shown pessimism about prospects for peace and skepticism about US intentions--attitudes that run counter to Sadat's own position and actions.

(continued)

Feb 4, 1974

Central Intelligence Bulletin

5

Haykal's latest onslaught came in his weekly article on February 1, which he devoted to an attack on US Middle East policy. His statement that this policy has not altered was a direct contradiction of Sadat's recent, oft-repeated public assertions that US policy has indeed changed and that there should be some reciprocal gestures from the Arabs.

Apparently still smarting over the loss of the status he enjoyed when Nasir was alive, Haykal tends now to oppose policies simply because he played no part in their development. His latest article may have precipitated Sadat's move against him.

Feb 4, 1974

Central Intelligence Bulletin

6

25X1

Approved For Release 2003/12/03 : CIA-RDP79T00975A026100070001-4

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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GRENADA: According to press reports, Premier Eric Gairy has withdrawn his agreement to the mediation of political differences with his rivals, thus destroying hopes for defusing the tense situation. This reversal came after a Caribbean Council of Churches mediation team had arrived on the island and moderate oppositionists, although skeptical of Gairy's sincerity, had decided to try for an agreement.

The radical oppositionists now feel their distrust of the Premier has been vindicated. They have been

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Venezuela: After three days of meetings with officials of Central American countries which are suffering from the Arab oil cutback, Caracas announced it would give these countries preferential treatment in oil supplies but not in prices. The oil supplies reportedly will come from royalties paid in crude to the Venezuelan Government by foreign oil companies.

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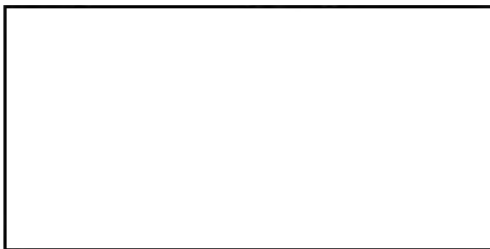
Feb 4, 1974

Central Intelligence Bulletin

10

25X1

Top Secret



Top Secret